

A black and white photograph of a jazz quintet performing on stage. In the foreground, a man (Lennie Niehaus) is shown in profile, playing a saxophone. Behind him, two other musicians are visible, both wearing glasses and playing saxophones. The background is dark with some stage lights visible. The text is overlaid in the upper right quadrant.

LENNIE NIEHAUS
VOL. 1 'THE QUINTETS'
CONTEMPORARY C3518

Lennie Niehaus Vol. 1: The Quintets

LENNIE NIEHAUS, *alto sax* with (Quintet No. 1) JACK MONTROSE, *tenor sax*; BOB GORDON, *baritone sax*; MONTY BUDWIG, *bass* & SHELLY MANNE, *drums* or (Quintet No. 2) STU WILLIAMSON, *valve trombone & trumpet*; HAMPTON HAWES *piano*; RED MITCHELL, *bass* & SHELLY MANNE, *drums*.

IN JAZZ, both traditional and progressive, the vitality of the forms attracts young musicians of talent, and in turn these young talents enrich the musical forms in which they work. A case in point is Lennie Niehaus, who makes his sudden entry to the center of the jazz stage from the wings of obscurity with this, his first album.

He is a remarkable alto soloist, with a sense of flowing melodic line, lovely cool tone, and a strong feeling for rhythm. He is a thoughtful and serious musician, who composes and arranges in his own style, with definite ideas of where he is going and what he wants to achieve.

Niehaus was born in St. Louis, Missouri, June 1, 1929. In 1936, when he was seven, the family moved to Los Angeles. At eleven, he studied violin with his father, a professional violinist. He also studied oboe and bassoon, and took up alto sax at thirteen. This last instrument was a shock to his family, since it was not held in great repute in classical circles, and the Niehaus-hold was definitely oriented to classical music. There was something in the jazz idiom of 1941 which attracted him, and while he was regarded as the black sheep of the family, he persisted in wooing the saxophone.

Lennie attended Los Angeles City College for two years, and Los Angeles State College for three. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree, and also his secondary teaching credentials. He majored in theory and composition, and wrote legitimate compositions, among them a violin sonata, a woodwind trio, and several clarinet quartets. During these years, in addition to his work as a student, he joined the musicians union, and played with various local bands and the big band of Jerry Wald. After completing college, he joined Stan Kenton. Here his career as a jazz musician might have begun—except for the fact he was drafted. For two years he was out of circulation, but he spent the time to good advantage, working with a concert band at Fort Ord, California. In the main he played oboe, but he also organized a jazz group. Since money was no object, he was free to experiment with a variety of sounds; he wrote for quartet, and octet, and had the satisfaction of hearing his works performed by his colleagues in fatigues.

On his discharge in June 1954 he headed home for Los Angeles. Shelly Manne heard him one night when he sat in with Shorty Rogers' Giants at The Haig, and promptly reported to the Contemporary office that a new star was around, without a recording contract. Howard Rumsey gave an equally glowing report from The Lighthouse in Hermosa Beach after Lennie sat in there. Within days Lennie had signed as an exclusive Contemporary artist, and within a few weeks this, his first album, had been recorded.

[The first 10" long-playing album (C2513), was exceptionally well received. For its reissue in 12" form, Niehaus varied the programming with a new Quintet session (recorded January 1956) using piano and valve trombone instead of tenor and baritone saxes. Contemporary recorded four Niehaus albums in the year and a half following Vol. 1: 10" C2517 *The Octet, No. 1*; 12" C3503 *The Octet, No. 2*; 12" C3510 *The Quintets & Strings*; and 12" C3524 *The Sextet*. During much of this period Lennie was featured with Stan Kenton's orchestra. In August 1956 he returned to Los Angeles after a long Kenton tour of Europe. He has finished high on the jazz polls in the U.S. and abroad, and his international reputation as a gifted and versatile soloist, composer, and leader is firmly established.]

By LESTER KOENIG

July 1954 with added paragraph (in brackets) August, 1956



Photo by Pauline Annon

Williamson & Niehaus recording.

Side 1

I REMEMBER YOU by Victor Schertzinger & Johnny Mercer. (Paramount Music Corp. ASCAP. Time: 2.34.)

POINCIANA by Nat Simon, Buddy Bernier & Manuel Liso. (Edward B. Marks Music Corp. BMI. Time: 3.49.)

WHOSE BLUES by Lennie Niehaus. (Contemporary Music. BMI. Time: 3.20.)

PRIME RIB by Lennie Niehaus. (Contemporary Music. BMI. Time: 3.09.)

I SHOULD CARE by Axel Stordahl, Paul Weston & Sammy Cahn. (Dorsey Brothers' Music, Inc. ASCAP. Time: 3.14.)

INSIDE OUT by Lennie Niehaus. (Contemporary Music. BMI. Time: 2.56.)

Side 2

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME by Jimmy McHugh & Clarence Gaskill. (Mills Music, Inc. ASCAP. Time: 3.30.)

YOU STEPPED OUT OF A DREAM by Nacio Herb Brown & Gus Kahn. (Leo Feist, Inc. ASCAP. Time: 2.38.)

I'LL TAKE ROMANCE by Ben Oakland & Oscar Hammerstein II. (Bourne, Inc. ASCAP. Time: 2.59.)

HAPPY TIMES by Lennie Niehaus. (Contemporary Music. BMI. Time: 3.28.)

DAY BY DAY by Paul Gerard Smith & Frank Skinner. (Robbins Music Corp. ASCAP. Time: 3.35.)

BOTTOMS UP by Lennie Niehaus. (Contemporary Music. BMI. Time: 3.11.)

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I'll Take Romance, Prime Rib, Inside Out and Bottoms Up were recorded in Los Angeles July 2, 1954 with: LENNIE NIEHAUS, *alto sax*; JACK MONTROSE, *tenor sax*; BOB GORDON, *baritone sax*; MONTY BUDWIG, *bass* & SHELLY MANNE, *drums*.

You Stepped Out Of A Dream, Whose Blues, I Remember You and Day By Day were recorded July 9, 1954 with the same personnel. Both July 2nd & 9th sessions were originally issued on Contemporary 10" long-playing C2513.

I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me, Poinciana, Happy Times and I Should Care were recorded at Contemporary's studio in Los Angeles January 20, 1956 with: LENNIE NIEHAUS, *alto sax*; STU WILLIAMSON, *trumpet & valve trombone*; HAMPTON HAWES, *piano*; RED MITCHELL, *bass* & SHELLY MANNE, *drums*. Previously unissued.

Produced by Lester Koenig. John Palladino was the recording engineer for the first two sessions. Roy DuNann was the recording engineer for the third session and supervised the technical production.

TECHNICAL DATA: 30-15,000 cycles. The first two sessions were recorded with a single AKG C-12 condenser microphone, the AKG's first use on a jazz date. A multiple microphone technique with three AKG C-12s was used for the third session. Ampex tape recorders. Mastering on Scully lathe, Western Electric feedback cutting head, beated stylus, inner diameter quality equalization, Vinylite "Gruve/Gard" pressings.

In response to Contemporary's request, Lennie's own comments on the album follow:

"I CHOSE FOUR standard tunes for the quintet which are not too often heard or played but which have very interesting chord structures and offer a challenge to the improviser. The originals, as are all of the arrangements, are written, for the most part, in a contrapuntal style. The lines are derived basically from the harmonies and are independent of each other although they move along vertically in most cases. Various techniques of contrapuntal writing are employed such as inversion, sequential patterns, contrary motion, etc. Movement is usually maintained in all of the lines to keep the necessary swing except, of course, where the natural places of rest occur such as at the ends of phrases and periods.

"Although the instrumentation of the group is small I tried to use contrasting sections to get variations in sound. *I Remember You* and *I'll Take Romance* start out with all the instruments playing. A contrasting section occurs in *I'll Take Romance* when after sixteen bars of ensemble playing the bass and drums are tacit and the saxes play four bars by themselves. The baritone plays the melody while the alto plays a background motive which is played in contrary motion by the tenor. On three of the tunes the alto plays a solo introduction: on *Prime Rib* and *Whose Blues* it is four bars in length; on *You Stepped Out Of A Dream* the alto plays a two bar introduction and then continues to play eight bars of the tune alone. The melody of *Dream*, played by the ensemble, is not heard until the last chorus.

"On two of the tunes, *Bottoms Up* and *Inside Out*, the saxes play the first sixteen bars of the tune alone with the drums supplying fill-ins, accents and imitating motives. Simple backgrounds are supplied by the horns to offer a contrast to one sax playing an improvised solo with the bass and drums. These backgrounds are usually rhythmic or legato unisons. On *Whose Blues* the theme is not introduced until the alto improvises three choruses. After the theme is heard, the alto continues to improvise which leads into the next section where all three saxes improvise five choruses of four bars apiece. This, in turn, leads into the two choruses where all of the saxes improvise at the same time, started by the alto playing a two bar motive which is developed by the other saxes. After this section a twelve bar drum solo is heard and then a recapitulation of the theme.

"The idea of using a rhythm section without a piano is not an innovation but the use of the same type of instruments such as alto, tenor, and baritone saxophones with the pianoless rhythm section is, and I feel makes for an interesting sound.

"[For contrast on the third session I use piano, bass, drums, alto with valve trombone on three of the tunes and trumpet on the fourth, *I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me*. The arrangements are simple: a first chorus and usually an out chorus, and made up mostly of improvisation. On *Poinciana*, the first chorus is played by the alto and drums alone. There is some contrapuntal play among the alto, valve trombone, bass and drums on the first and third eight bars of *I Should Care*, and some interesting fours on *Happy Times* among alto, valve trombone and piano and between the bass and drums.]"

By LENNIE NIEHAUS

July 1954 with added paragraph (in brackets) August, 1956

Cover photo (taken at the July 9th, 1954 session: L to R Montrose, Niehaus & Gordon) & design by William Claxton

CONTEMPORARY RECORDS, 8481 MELROSE PLACE, LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

CONTEMPORARY
RECORDS

1. I REMEMBER YOU

BY V. SCHERTZINGER & J. MERCER

2. POINCIANA

BY NAT SIMON & BUDDY BERNIER

3. WHOSE BLUES

BY LENNIE NIEHAUS

4. PRIME RIB

BY LENNIE NIEHAUS

C3518
(LKL 12-89)

Side 1

5. I SHOULD CARE

BY A. STORDAHL, P. WESTON & S. CAHN

6. INSIDE OUT

BY LENNIE NIEHAUS

Lennie Niehaus, Vol. 1
THE QUINTETS

LKL 12-89-04

CONTEMPORARY
RECORDS

1. I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT
YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME
BY JIMMY McHUGH & CLARENCE GASKILL

2. YOU STEPPED OUT OF A DREAM
BY NACIO HERB BROWN & GUS KAHN

3. I'LL TAKE ROMANCE
BY BEN OAKLAND & OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II

4. HAPPY TIMES
BY LENNIE NIEHAUS

C3518
(LKL 12-90)

Side 2

5. DAY BY DAY
BY PAUL G. SMITH & FRANK SKINNER

6. BOTTOMS UP
BY LENNIE NIEHAUS

Lennie Niehaus, Vol. 1
THE QUINTETS

LKL 12-90-03